

8 February 1955

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ELECTIONS IN ANDHRA STATE (INDIA)

I. Elections (first ever to be held in state) start 11 Feb., last 5 days. At issue - whether Indian government will permit Communist Party to win control of a state legislature (would be first state victory for Communists since Indian independence).

A. Communists historically strong in Andhra: Actually held control of area in 1948-1950.

1. Still strong today, although shifted from violent to peaceful tactics.
2. Started their election campaign 2 months before Congress Party did.
3. Unlike local Congress organization, which split by personal rivalries, Communists fairly well-knit.
4. Using some top movie stars in campaigning.
5. Have shipped in 2,000 new bicycles to help their workers in electioneering.

B. Congress Party shows no signs of appealing to voters by similar means, but making desperate effort prevent Communist victory.

1. Congress using "strong-arm" tactics, pouring in money.
2. Congress' strongest organizer (S. K. Patil) has been sent to Andhra apparently with unlimited authority, funds.

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- C. Both Congress and Communists claim will win over 100 seats (of total 196): Outcome actually uncertain. Apparently will depend on extent Congress Party willing to use illegal tactics.
- II. If Congress Party unsuccessful in rigging elections, probability is that government will declare Andhra state to be under "President's Rule" on grounds election mismanagement, disorder.
- A. State has been under "President's Rule" since November '54, when Congress-controlled government fell in "no confidence" vote (opposition move to repeal local prohibition).
- III. Such a government move would be no solution to basic problem.
- A. Would be open admission by Congress Party of inability to rule Andhra by democratic means.

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NSC BRIEFING

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BACKGROUND - ELECTIONS IN ANDHRA

- I. Andhra state formed in Oct 53 from the Telugu-speaking northern districts of Madras state. Population--21,500,000. Large percentage (specific figures not available) are Communists or supporters.
 - A. Andhra is first "linguistic" state in India. Its future is important as an example for other areas, such as parts of Bombay, Madras and the Punjab, where there is a strong desire to form new linguistic states. The Congress Party has stated that other linguistic would be formed if Andhra experiment successful.
 - B. Andhra state comprises eastern half of India's largest Communist strong-hold (other half being in Hyderabad state). Between '48 and '50, whole area was under Communist control and was recovered by the government only through use of troops and armed police.
 - C. Feb 11 elections will be first held in Andhra. Present legislative assemblymen were moved over from the elected Madras legislature when Andhra created. Andhra legislature has been on shaky grounds from beginning since neither Congress Party nor Communists had clearcut majority.

- II. The Congress-controlled government fell on 6 November 1954 during an opposition effort to repeal prohibition. In a no-confidence vote, two Congressmen and some Independents voted with the opposition, overriding the expressed views of national Congress leadership.
- III. During Andhra elections, 576 candidates will contest total of 196 seats in state legislature (3 Congressmen already elected unopposed). Congress Party contesting 134 seats and its allies 51 more. Communists contesting 169 seats, other opposition parties 47 seats. Independents contesting 175.